



April 5, 2013

To: All Mayors in Ontario  
cc: Ontario MPP's

***Re: CONCERNS ABOUT MANAGING OUR COMMUNITIES' GROWTH PLANS***

Dear Mayor,

You may not know of the Glenway Preservation Association (GPA), a community-based organization representing thousands of residents in Newmarket, Ontario. You will, however, be aware of the plight of many communities throughout Ontario with local municipalities whose ability to control their destiny is being severely undermined by unnecessary and unwanted development pressures. We are writing to enlist your support in changing the course of growth for its own sake, in favour of sound, community- and environmentally-friendly planning decisions.

The Town of Newmarket is one of 25 municipalities identified in the province's Places to Grow strategy as an intensification corridor to accommodate increased residential and industrial growth by 2031. While the Places to Grow strategy was designed to eliminate urban sprawl through planned development strategies, an unintended consequence is in fact causing significant distress within communities. This is the situation that is occurring when municipalities, who have sound plans to meet their growth targets in ways that also address community needs, are being challenged by developers who are able to override municipal Official Plans by leveraging the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) to counter the municipal council decisions, often using the growth targets to validate their claims. This has a significant consequence for municipalities who are being robbed of their ability to manage their own growth plans without having to spend significant tax dollars to defend their community's interests at the OMB.

The Town of Newmarket faces just such a situation. Recently, the Glenway golf course, one of the Town's last remaining open green spaces, as it is designated in our approved Official Plan, was purchased by Marianneville Developments. Marianneville has submitted an application to amend the Official Plan, and turn this precious resource into a development of over 700 housing units. The developer is justifying the development on the grounds that it will support the growth targets set for the Town of Newmarket. In actual fact, other planned development—supported by the Official Plan— will already more than accommodate our growth requirements.

Anticipating that a negative response from the Town will undoubtedly lead to a costly challenge at the OMB, our municipality is gearing up to spend hundreds of thousands of taxpayers' dollars to defend its own Official Plan. In addition, the GPA has been building its own legal defense fund, in order to ensure that the community has a voice in the OMB decision-making process.

We believe that this dynamic is playing itself out across the province in similar growth targeted communities. While property owners have the right to develop their property within sound planning principles, we do not believe that property owners should be able to exploit the Places



to Grow Act objectives by creating intensification projects inconsistent with community interests and needs.

There is a growing body of evidence to support the position that municipalities and communities are no longer willing to allow their interests to be overridden by developers who use their “deep pockets” and resources to appeal to an OMB that applies insufficient weight to community interests in its decision-making.

Recently, Frank Klees, MPP for Newmarket-Aurora, introduced The Preserving Existing Communities Act (Bill 41), which would amend the Places to Grow Act ([https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=9](https://www.placestogrow.ca/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=4&Itemid=9)), to address this inequity. The GPA supports the principle of Bill 41, and its objective to empower municipal councils to make the final decision about what their communities grow like, while also ensuring appropriate accountability of municipal Councils to their electorate for the decisions they make. Further information on Bill 41 along with a petition of support is attached here. ([http://www.frank-klees.on.ca/CurrentIssues/PMB\\_PreservingExistingCommunitiesAct.htm](http://www.frank-klees.on.ca/CurrentIssues/PMB_PreservingExistingCommunitiesAct.htm)).

If you support your municipality’s right to maintain and uphold the integrity of your Official Plan and your community’s interest against unwanted and unnecessary development, we encourage you to support The Preserving Existing Communities Act within your own municipal council, and with your provincial elected officials. Feel free to invite your residents to submit their signed petition directly to the office of their MPP.

We welcome your response. Together we can make a difference in reclaiming control over the process of how we grow and evolve our own communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christina Bisanz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christina Bisanz  
Chairperson, GPA  
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